UNITED WE READ is a Cooke County United Way initiative for Early Childhood Development and focuses on Children’s Literacy. Our children are the future for us all. A good education, including good reading skills, provides our youth with a bright future. It takes the efforts of many to lead our youth on that path starting with the youngest. Placing books in the hands of our children and their families is just part of the path!

United Way has the ability to purchase new books for our different United We Read programs through the generous donations made through our community campaign and our Legacy Gift program.

Our inventory of gently used books have been made possible by our community who chooses to “recycle” children’s books. Books may be dropped off at the United Way offices located at 114 East Main Street in downtown Gainesville. A group of retired teachers assist United Way by sorting the collected books.

READ ACROSS AMERICA

March 2nd is Dr. Seuss’s birthday and in celebration, there is a national program called “Read Across America”. Our United Way participated this year for the first time by providing story time volunteer readers in each school in Cooke County, both public and private, all on the same day reading the same book! That’s a total of 821 students across the county! Pre-K and Kindergarten classes were read “The Cat in the Hat” by 17 volunteers. United Way purchased a copy of the book for each student and teacher including stickers and book markers. It was a huge success and enjoyed by all. It’s already on the calendar for next year!

STORY TIME

United Way has partnered with the Gainesville & Lake Kiowa Kiwanis Clubs. “United We Read” fits perfectly into the clubs program of reading to Pre-K and Kindergarten students. Our program provides the Story Time readers books to read and copies for each student to take home! So far, 528 books have been given to the Kiwanis reading program! It’s a win-win program promoting family reading time!

This year’s Power of the Purse event partnered with the Gainesville Fire Dept. and the Cooke County 4H! Proceeds of the event were designated for United Way’s focus on Education. The funds were also used for Children’s Literacy Initiative grants that included the purchase of over 1,500 new books for all Pre-K and Kindergarten students in Cooke County. The firemen and 4H youth will participate in Story Time including reading to the students and providing each child a copy of the books for their
BOOK FAIRS

Cooke County United Way has partnered with the local Cooke County 4H Clubs to distribute FREE books at local annual community events. Over 800 books were given away last year!

Find us at the:
- Cooke County Family Adventures Expo
- Tools for Schools Back to School Fair
- Gainesville Depot Day
- Valley View Christmas Parade and Holiday Fair

BOOK STATIONS

Book stations are located inside local area agencies such as Boys & Girls Club, GISD Head Start, VISTO & Abigail’s Arms. A “Reading Rocket” book cart or treasure chest is supplied with new and gently used books, coloring sheets, bookmarks and pencils - all free for the taking!

This Summer, two grants were issued to the Boys & Girls Club for their new Summer Read program. The grants included the purchase of over 900 new books. Also supplied was approximately 250 gently used books for the new Book Nook. This will be an ongoing partnership.

BOOK DRIVES

United Way has partnered with the Lake Kiowa Kiwanis Club. Kiwanis members conduct book drives collecting new and gently used books that help provide the inventory for our Book Stations and Book Fairs.

Community youth have also donated their books, held a book drive and a birthday party where guests were to bring a new book instead of birthday gifts! WOW!